Team Kit Guide

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration

CONTENTS

This *ETA Team Kit* has been developed by the ETA Reinvention Office which represents the partnership of AFGE's National Council of Field Labor Locals (NCFLL), Local 12 and ETA mamagement. The Kit is designed to assist associates in forming and working in productive teams; and to serve as a guidebook for team members and to provide the information and tools to assist you in developing successful teams.

The Kit is also designed to be "user" friendly with tips, tools, and information on all phases of team development. ETA associates are encouraged to refer to it often as a ready reference on team implementation.

The Kit is not an encyclopedia about teams, and therefore does not contain everything about teams. It does, however, include what we believe to be the most pertinent, useful information for working in teams in ETA.

We wish to thank the writers in the Reinvention Office for their research and preparation of the Kit. We also thank Ed Strong (Philadelphia - RA), Vic Trunzo (The Enterprise), and Barak Rosenbloom (Seattle), AFGE Local 12, and NCFLL for their insightful review and comments. Thanks, too, to the sponsor of the Kit, Anna Goddard, Director of the Office of Reinvention.

Teams are one of the most effective tools devised for tapping the strengths, talents and energies of people. It is a tool that promotes the survival and success of the organization.

ETA TEAM GUIDELINES

The goal of the ETA Reinvention Team is that the agency become a high performance, team-based organization. A fundamental premise of ETA's 1994 Streamlining Plan is that as ETA becomes more customer-focused, associates will be working in teams more than ever before.

As we move toward consolidation of job training resources and services, a team-based organization will be even more critical to our success. This kind of organization draws upon the collective strengths of individual team members to solve problems and make decisions for which they are the most knowledgeable or for which they have the most at stake.

Team-based organizations have other benefits, including:

◆ Creating environments that are conducive to learning,
◆ Maximizing individual contributions, and
◆ Providing flexibility in responding to customer needs.

THE PARTNERSHIP ROLE

In ETA, teams are formed under the labor/management partnership umbrella. Both management and union representatives at all levels must act as agents of change, showing the same commitment to cultural change as they show in meeting performance objectives.

Cultural change must be a normal part of the job, permeating every task until it becomes the core of the job itself. The partners' commitment to change cannot be something which is discussed once and then forgotten. They must be persistent in promoting the cultural change or the effort will be viewed as just another program.

As the culture of the organization changes to one of high-involvement and empowerment, the roles of the management and union leaders change to include those of coaches and mentors. Supporting teams, reinforcing positive performance, modeling organizational values, communicating effectively both formally and informally, and helping to remove organizational barriers are all part of the leadership role.

This partnership between NCFLL, Local 12 and ETA management is the basis for all of our reinvention activities. The unions reserve the right to make decisions regarding bargaining unit participation on teams.

- For Local 12: In consultation with appropriate Local 12 representatives, the Agency Vice-President will make the decision.

- For NCFLL: In consultation with the ETA EIQI UM pair, each Local President will make the decision.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ETA AS A TEAM-BASED ORGANIZATION

With the variety of definitions, theories, and processes put forth for implementation of teams, in ETA we have "customized" what we mean by teams. In ETA, within the context of a strong union/management partnership, teams will:

◆ Practice group process skills
◆ Support achievement of ETA goals
◆ Ensure employee involvement
◆ Foster information sharing
◆ Use consensus decision-making
◆ Operate with a team charter
◆ Address roles
◆ Work toward continuous improvement
◆ Be accountable for results

Setting up a team-based organization is not easy but certain principles and tools can help avoid some of the pitfalls that all teams face. In the *Wisdom Of Teams*, Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith point out several common sense findings which should be remembered when implementing teams:

1. **A demanding performance challenge tends to create a team.** The hunger for performance and results is just as important to team success as team-building exercises, special incentives or team leaders with ideal profiles. Potential teams without such challenges usually fail to become successful teams.

2. **The disciplined application of "team basics" is essential for successful teams**. Team basics include size, purpose, goals, skills needed, method of operation (charter), and accountability for results. Paying rigorous attention to these creates the conditions necessary for successful team performance; however, there is a tendency to inadvertently ignore one or more of them.

3. **Team performance opportunities exist in all parts of the organization.** Team basics apply to many different groups, including teams that recommend things; e.g. task teams, teams that make or do things, e.g. natural work teams; and teams that run things, e.g. leadership teams. Each of these types of teams face unique challenges. But the commonalities are more important than the differences when striving for team performance.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL ETA TEAMS

1. **Small enough in number:**
   - can you convene, communicate, and interact easily?
   - do you need more people to achieve your ends?
   - are subteams possible or necessary?
   - are there twelve or fewer members?

2. **Adequate levels of complimentary skills:**
   - are three types of skills present (functional/ technical, problem-solving/decision-making, and interpersonal)?
   - are any skill areas that are critical missing or under represented?
   - are members willing and do they have potential to learn and develop skills?

3. **Truly meaningful purpose:**
   - is it broader and deeper than just near-term goal?
   - is it a team purpose or just one individual's purpose?
   - do all members understand and articulate it in the same way?
   - do members frequently refer to it and explore its implications?
   - do members feel it is important, if not exciting?

4. **Specific goal or goals:**
   - are the goals team goals versus organizational goals versus one individual's goals?
   - are they clear, simple, and measurable?
   - are they realistic as well as ambitious?
   - is their relative importance and priority clear to all members?
   - do all members articulate the goals in the same way?

5. **Clear working approach:**
   - is approach concrete, clear and really understood and agreed upon?
   - will it capitalize on and enhance the skills of all members?
   - does it require equal amounts of real work from team members?
   - does it provide for open interaction, fact-based problem-solving, and results-oriented evaluation?
   - does it provide for modification over time?

THE PURPOSE OF TEAMS IS TO:

Make improvements in the workplace which support the needs of the work unit and/or the organization's objectives

Align resources and work processes to meet the needs of the customer(s)

Recognize and utilize the abilities of each employee

Help members grow by developing their potential

6. Sense of mutual accountability:
- are you individually and jointly accountable for the team's purpose, goals, approach, and work products?
- can you and do you measure progress against specific goals?
- do all members feel responsible for all measures?
- do members understand areas of individual and joint responsibility?
- is there a sense that "only the team can fail?"

TYPES OF TEAMS

There are many different types of teams. The following list is not all-inclusive, but attempts to capture the most common types of teams in ETA.

◆ **Natural Work Teams are:**
Groups of associates who work together in an "intact work unit." Based on an understanding of their work unit's purpose and functions, they are accountable for achieving a set of results and empowered to make decisions about how their work will be accomplished to achieve those results. The manager acts as a coach or team leader, enabling and supporting the work of the team.

They work as a team either:
- on a permanent basis to do their work with mutual accountability and cooperation (for example, "home base" teams; office-based councils) or

- on a temporary basis to address specific problems or issues within the unit, including making improvements (for example, process improvement teams, problem-solving teams, reengineering teams).

◆ **Multi-program Work Teams are:**
Groups of associates from one or more "functional areas or offices" who come together either on a temporary or ongoing basis to solve a specific problem, develop a specific product or address a specific issue. They are accountable for accomplishing one or more specific assigned tasks. Like natural work teams, they are empowered to make decisions about how the tasks will be accomplished. They may have a coach, sponsor, and/or team leader. These teams can be formed with associates from within an office or Region or combine many offices and Regions. (Examples include Customer Cluster Launch Teams, Training Committee, One Stop/Boiler Room)

◆ **Self-Directed Work Teams are:**
Teams that are responsible for all personnel functions, including appraisals and compensation. Leader consults with teams as needed, but spends more time on strategic issues. Self-directed work teams are an ideal toward which natural work teams progress as they learn to master team skills and empowerment concepts.

◆ **Leadership Teams are:**
Teams comprised of leaders who make policy decisions. In ETA, these teams include the
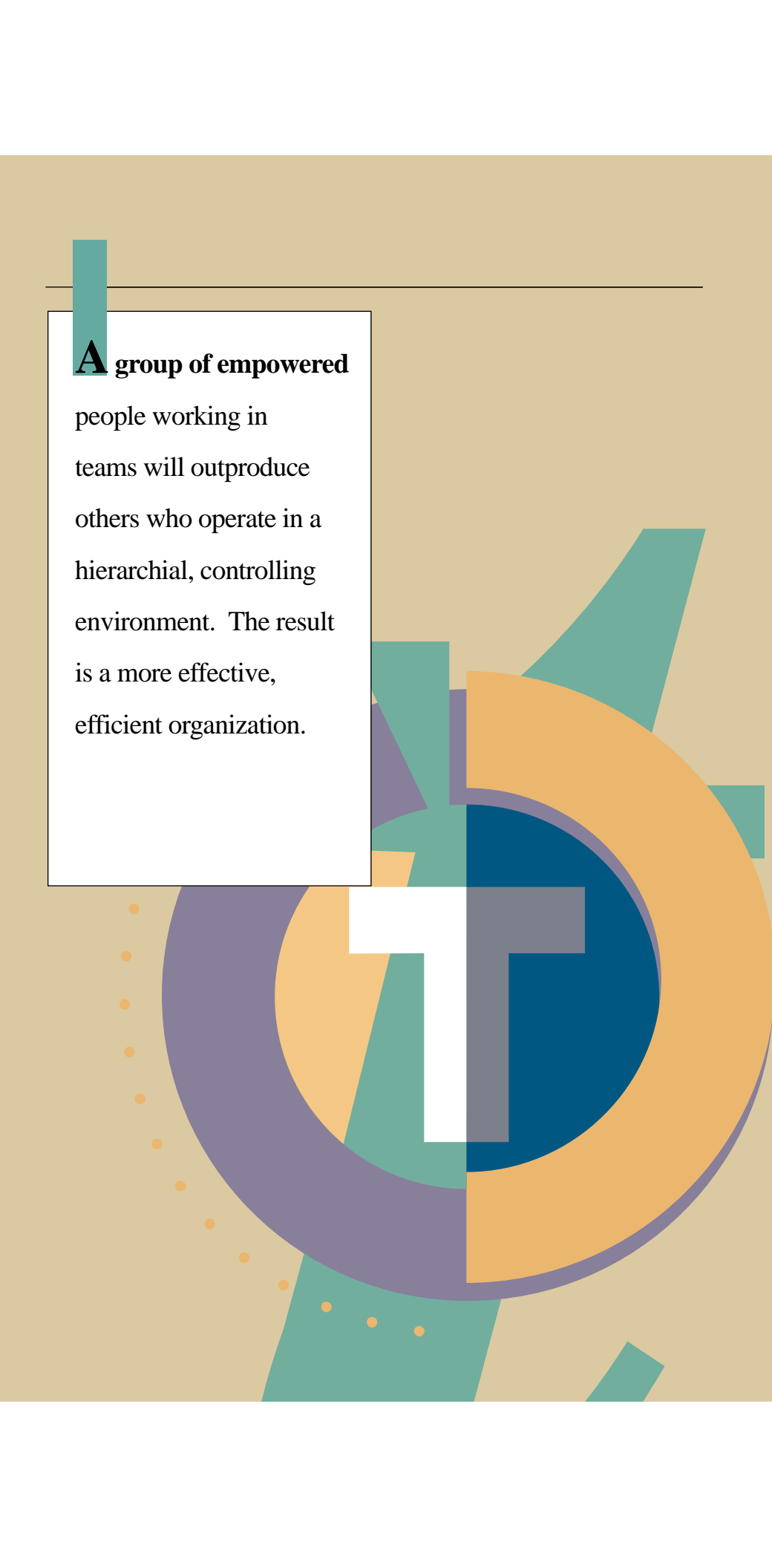
Reinvention Team, comprised of union and management representatives; the Management Team, comprised of ETA senior staff; the Quality Partnership; and the EIQI U/M pairs.

SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT

Alignment is a "supporting element" of ETA's reinvention framework. The premise of supporting teams through "alignment" is that systems such as human resources, budget and procurement can be designed to be consistent with the organization's mission, vision or values.

In other words, if a particular system is aligned with an organization's stated view of itself, it facilitates achievement of the mission, communicates the vision and/or incorporates a stated value such as empowerment.

For example, human resources systems dealing with appraisals, promotions and compensation/rewards have been or are being reviewed in ETA in terms of their support for our streamlining objectives. Of particular importance to team members is the extent to which systems support the shifting of decision-making authority from management.

A group of empowered people working in teams will outproduce others who operate in a hierarchial, controlling environment. The result is a more effective, efficient organization.

KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Teams can be more effective than traditional work structures by enhancing learning, increasing flexibility, and maximizing individual contributions. To realize these advantages, teams must support performance goals of the office or unit and should not be simply "teams for teams sake."

Several key questions to consider in starting teams include:

◆ What is our mission?
◆ What are our goals?
◆ Who are our customers and what are their needs?
◆ How can teams help us accomplish our mission and reach our goals?
◆ What are the barriers to success?
◆ What type of support services does the team need? Consultant support? Facilitation support? Training?

An excellent first step in planning for team start-up is to conduct an organizational readiness assessment. A readiness assessment is a tool, often designed in questionnaire format, to determine how the organizational climate, past history and individual experience of the staff will impact on team effectiveness.
One such tool is the Self-Assessment System

developed by Simply Better! This system will help your organization conduct a self-assessment, identify key areas for quality improvement, and provide steps for taking action to change.

Assistance in conducting a readiness assessment can be obtained from the ETA Reinvention Office.

TEAM CHARTER

In addition to reaching agreement on the team's direction and operations, developing a Team Charter is also beneficial in building relationships and creating team identity. In many instances, a Charter will be the team's first accomplishment and is a way to assert its uniqueness, gain self-understanding, and clarify its boundaries in relation to its sponsor and other entities.

Guidelines

A Charter is the written assignment for a team. Draft charters can be prepared by a sponsor or a team, but whichever approach is used, teams and sponsors should reach agreement on the contents of the Charter. It is recommended that the following information be included in the charter:

◆ **Team objective**
Describe the desired outcome of the teams efforts in active terms. State as tangibly as possible what the group is supposed to accomplish. Examples of project objectives are: streamline the procurement process,

reduce errors in the data entry process, and increase the responsiveness of the telephone answering process.

◆ **Background**
Describe why the work of the team is important, and how it relates to the organization's visions/goals/objectives.

◆ **Approach**
Specify the broad strategy the team is to follow in carrying out its work. The team can then figure out how to accomplish its objectives within the specified approach.

◆ **Target and completion dates**
When should the objectives be fully completed? What are key milestones?

◆ **Reporting requirements**
How often should the team report on progress to their sponsor? Should the reports be verbal or written? What should be contained in the reports?

◆ **Deliverables**
Describe the tangible outputs the team is expected to produce. One deliverable is often a work plan showing the task breakdown that will culminate in the successful completion of work. Other deliverables might be periodic written progress reports, draft and final documentation or a summary of the results of any data collection.

◆ **Authority**
What can the team do without prior sponsor approval? Can it collect data? Interview customers? Implement changes in the processes?

◆ **Limits**
Describe any constraints on the set of alternatives or solutions open to a team.

◆ **Membership**
Describe the membership of the team, including what organizations members will be drawn from, how they will be selected, etc.

GROUND RULES

The quality of group outcomes is strongly influenced by the quality of group interaction. In most groups, process is as important as content. That is, how things get done and how people interact are important determinants of what gets done.

Groups find that ground rules help them improve their group interaction by agreeing on how they will treat one another, manage conflict, solve problems, and make decisions.

Several ETA groups have found the following list of ground rules helpful as a checklist for expected behaviors:

◆ One person speaks at a time
◆ No interrupting others
◆ No side conversations
◆ Respect other's opinions
◆ Everyone participates

SAMPLE CHECKLIST FOR MOVING TO TEAMS

DATE   **ACTION ITEM**

_____ Convene meeting with Administrator, Office Director, and Union-Management Pair to discuss and agree on general approach to team implementation.

_____ Select planning team(s): steering committee, design team, others.

_____ Develop charter(s) for planning team(s).

_____ Educate the planning team(s).

_____ Planning team discusses "Key Questions to Consider"

_____ Hold all-employee meeting to announce plans to implement teams, gain their input, and to prepare employees for conducting readiness assessment.

_____ Conduct readiness assessment.

_____ Based on results of readiness assessment, planning team develops detailed plan for team implementation.

_____ Hold all-employee meeting to discuss results of organizational readiness assessment and announce plans for implementing teams.

_____ Identify resources needed: training, facilitation, consultation support, etc.

_____ Train all supervisors and managers in how to support teams.
_____ Implement plan.

_____ Evaluate.

_____ Fine tune.

GROUND RULES HELP ENSURE THAT GROUP INTERACTION HAS THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

Group members treat each other with respect

Different points of view do not lead to alienation but rather enhance the quality of group decisions

Each group member feels engaged in the solution of problems

Each group member feels comfortable with and committed to the group decision

Each member finds working with the group productive and rewarding

◆ Be clear and concise
◆ Be open and honest
◆ Practice active listening
◆ Have fun

Also, the "Key Principles" developed by Development Dimensions International and used in ETA's "High Involvement Training" may also be useful as ground rules:

◆ Maintain or enhance self-esteem
◆ Listen and respond with empathy
◆ Ask for help and encourage involvement

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each team member's roles and responsibilities support the team's tasks. The tasks, in turn, support the team's overall purpose, which is defined in the Team Charter.

Team members are most likely to be involved in the team— and committed to its purpose— when their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and the roles within the team work together.

All members should actively discuss and clarify which roles are needed to fulfill the team's purpose. The work of defining and clarifying roles and responsibilities is particularly important when the team begins its work, takes on a new task, or is joined by new members.

Team roles will vary according to the situation, but in ETA, roles typically include the following:

◆ Team Sponsor/Champion
◆ Team Leader/Coach
◆ Team Member

◆ Team Convener/Coordinator
◆ Team Facilitator

Team Sponsor Role

An important new role for managers and leadership groups is that of team sponsor. The team sponsor is the individual or group, usually in a position of authority, with responsibility for chartering a team and providing support and championing the team within the organization.

The sponsor provides consultation and guidance to the team and informs them of any outside influences which could affect their team goals. They must ensure the implementation of team recommendations and ensure that the team is recognized and rewarded.

Team Leader/Coach Role

We each bring something unique to our jobs, something that sets us apart. To bring these forces together, leadership is necessary.

An effective team leader, in ETA, takes on the following responsibilities:

◆ Focuses on the team's goals and approach.

◆ Puts everything in perspective by determining how a task contributes to the team's overall good.

◆ Makes sure that activities are consistent with the team's strategy.

AS A TEAM LEADER YOU WILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING ROLES:

1. Direct team activities

2. Facilitate cooperation among team members by sharing responsibility

3. Create an environment where all team members want to contribute to team activities

4. Coordinate with management and others associated with team activities

5. Train team members in the application of problem solving and meeting management tools and techniques

- ◆ Builds commitment and provides encouragement.
- ◆ Recognizes and rewards teamwork rather than individual accomplishments. Provides constructive feedback to individuals and the team.

- ◆ Creates developmental opportunities for team members. Identifies ways of strengthening the mix of individual skills that benefit the team as a whole.

- ◆ Helps the team identify the appropriate tools to accomplish the goal, making sure that each coaching session leaves team members better prepared to handle similar kinds of situations the next time they arise.

- ◆ Manages relationships outside of the team. Serves as a contact point between the team and other parts of the organization. Identifies potential obstacles and works with the sponsor to remove them.

- ◆ Models teamwork on a daily basis, showing you are committed to being a team player.

- ◆ Makes time to coach team members for success.

- ◆ Enlists others as leaders, relying on other team members to coach on topics and areas they know best.

Team Convener/Coordinator Role

Another ETA adaptation of the team leader role is that of convener. The convener makes arrangements for the meeting, distributes the agenda in advance (including minutes from previous meetings), and may conduct and/or facilitate the meeting.

Team Member Roles

These are people who form the bulk of the team, who carry out assignments and make improvements. The nature of the work of the team dictates who they are: usually people who work closely with some aspect of the team's responsibility area. They can be of various ranks, classifications, work areas, offices, and locations. Not everyone who could contribute something worthwhile need be on the team. Team members can always consult with experts and advisors as the work proceeds.

Team members should consider their participation a responsibility, not an intrusion on their "real work." The team responsibilities are now part of the members' real job.

Team members are responsible for contributing as fully to the project as possible, sharing their knowledge and expertise, participating in all meetings and discussions, even on topics outside their area. Team members carry out their assignments between meetings: interviewing customers, observing processes, gathering data, writing reports, etc.

To build a team culture that will work for the long haul, team members need to move beyond the habit of waiting for leaders to lead. Every-

one needs to be ready, willing and able to lead when the need arises. In this way, the workload tends to be spread more evenly, team resources are more fully developed and deployed, and the time involved throughout the team's processes is used more effectively. Better still, all members develop a sense of true ownership in the team, its activities and its accomplishments.
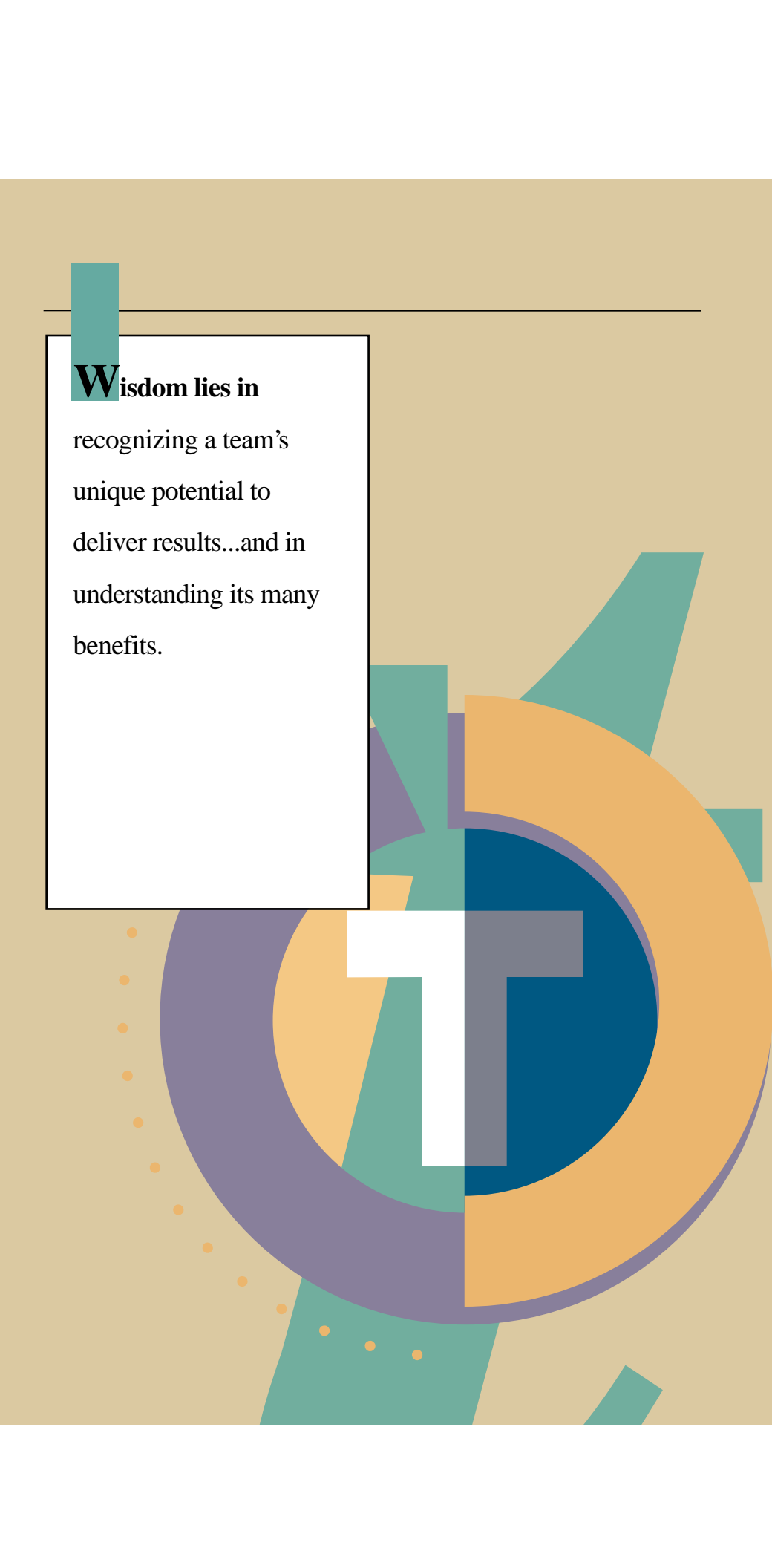
Facilitator/Consultant Role

While facilitation of teams is an integral part of team operations, it is taking two distinct paths in ETA. There is the "process" facilitator, who only intervenes when the process drifts or gets off track. The "active" facilitator guides the meeting, as would a discussion leader. The facilitator can be someone outside the group (such as a consultant or expert in the field); or someone in the group who possesses these skills. In any event, the team and facilitator should be clear about the roles and expectations.

A facilitator should:

◆ Focus on the process and task at hand and not direct the content of the discussions so that choices and decisions are left to group members

◆ Commit to a process that works for the group as a whole and for all the members equally so that everyone has an opportunity to participate and express ideas freely

◆ Promote the group's ownership of decisions

◆ Help keep the discussion focused on the topic and moving along

◆ Help the group adhere to its ground rules

◆ Tactfully prevent anyone from dominating or being overlooked

◆ Help bring discussions to a close

◆ Encourage full participation of team members

◆ Elicit or make suggestions on how to proceed

◆ Assist the group in clarifying issues, interests, options, criteria, and procedures on group problem solving; test for consensus; and support the contributions of all team members between meetings.

Wisdom lies in recognizing a team's unique potential to deliver results...and in understanding its many benefits.

I n this chapter, you will find useful information and tools that will help your team function in an effective manner. There is information on meeting management and evaluation, problem solving tools and methods of decision-making. If you need more information and guidance, stop by the ETA Office of Reinvention for assistance. ETA teams are **our** customers and we want to give them **excellent service!**

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of group discussions in meetings is to provide participants with an opportunity to review what has been presented, discussed, or distributed; express reactions, draw conclusions, and find common themes; and summarize, or move toward agreement. In group discussions, participants increase their understanding of the information or ideas that have been introduced by filling in gaps, hearing about other participant's views, and relating or applying what has been discussed to the work at hand. Discussion can be creative and productive, both as a way of learning and as a way of making decisions, because it:

◆ Involves more people in the analytical or decision-making process.
◆ Permits individual ideas to be considered.

◆ Provides clarification of information or ideas.
◆ Urges participants to express their convictions.
◆ Challenges entrenched ideas.
◆ Sharpens critical thinking.
◆ Permits all sides of a question to be explored.
◆ Draws upon the knowledge and experience of more people.
◆ Fosters a climate in which decisions reached are more likely to be readily accepted.

MEETING OR GROUP DISCUSSION MANAGEMENT

Effective meetings or group discussions just don't happen automatically by getting a group of people together to discuss a topic. To have an effective meeting or group discussion:

◆ **Have an agenda**
The agenda should ideally be agreed on at the previous meeting and be shared with participants in advance of the meeting. Agendas include discussion topics, expected outcomes for each topic (discussion, decision, information), timeframes, and person leading each topic's discussion.

◆ **Identify a meeting leader**
The meeting leader is responsible for taking the team through the agenda. Usually the meeting leader participates fully in the business of the meeting, with additional responsibility for summarizing discussions, articulating decisions and, in general, managing the group process (often with the help of a facilitator).

◆ **Have meeting ground rules**
Meeting ground rules are the agreed-upon expectations the team has of its individual members during the meeting. Coming to agreement about ground rules can greatly enhance the meeting and provide a reference point for members to gently remind each other when ground rules are not being followed. Ground rules vary widely, but commonly cover topics such as timeliness, attendance, behavior, participation, decision-making and roles.

◆ **Take minutes**
Each meeting should have a person identified to take minutes and distribute them to the team members. Minutes should include the date and time of meeting, names of participants, major topics of discussion, decisions, action items or assignments and name of persons responsible, unfinished business, and topics for next meeting's agenda.

◆ **Record key points on flip chart**
Recording key points on a flip chart during the meeting helps keep the team focused and clear about the discussion and decisions. Normally called a scribe, the person designated to fill this role lists all major ideas and decision points, captures thoughts verbatim, and hangs flip charts up so all can see.

◆ **Identify a timekeeper**
The timekeeper keeps track of elapsed time as the group works through the agenda and notifies the group when it is within 5-10

minutes from the end of the time allotted for a given topic. Often the facilitator serves as timekeeper.

◆ **Have a facilitator**
A facilitator is someone from outside the team who helps the team manage its group process. The facilitator and the team should agree on the facilitator's role, which may include helping the meeting leader call on participants in order, serving as scribe and/or timekeeper, suggesting tools or processes, intervening during the meeting as necessary to comment on the group process, and leading a process review at the end of the meeting.

◆ **Evaluate the meeting**
At the end of each meeting, the team should spend a few minutes getting people's reaction to what worked well, what didn't work, and suggestions for changes that would improve future meetings.

FLIP CHARTS

Purpose

Flip charts have two purposes in group process: first to help *give* information to other people, and second to help *collect* information from them. Flip charts enable a presenter to reinforce a point with words or illustrations. This enhances learning by allowing those listening to get information in two ways simultaneously— they hear an explanation from the person presenting at the same time they see statements or images on the flip chart. Flip charts also allow the person who is facilitating a meeting or discussion to capture comments of the participants, so they can be addressed or summarized later.

Using Flip Charts to *Give* Information

◆ Write on the flip chart so that everyone in the room can see.
◆ Prepare all (or part) of your flip charts in advance.
◆ Use varied color markers to set off points and keep attention of the participants.
◆ Use markers that are dark enough to be easily read from the farthest seat in the room when writing or illustrating key points.
◆ Use lighter or brighter colors to highlight points (underlining, arrows, bullets, etc.) or emphasize parts of an illustration.
◆ Put only four or five lines of print, or only two images on a sheet. There should be lots of white space. If the page is too crowded, it will be difficult for people to follow what you are saying while simultaneously trying to sort out what's on the flip chart.

Using Flip Charts to *Collect* Information

◆ Write big.
◆ Write fast and capture *key* words, not all words.
◆ You can fill the page with writing; people will have less trouble interpreting the flip chart because the comments are made first, and are written down second. That is, people hear and see in two steps (whereas in presentations with pre-prepared flip charts they hear and see at the same time).

◆ Capture people's actual words—don't edit!
◆ Post flip chart pages on the wall if points are of enduring value in the meeting (the walls can be "purged" periodically to avoid flip char overload).
◆ Hang flip charts where they can be seen by all, if possible.
◆ Tear strips of masking tape in advance of the session so you don't delay the posting process.

PROBLEM SOLVING TOOLS

Problem solving tools can be categorized in two major ways: those which help generate or prioritize ideas, and those which assist in analyzing them. Ideas may be in the form of problems or solutions, depending on where one is in the problem-solving process.

Illustrated on page 34 is a problem solving model and on page 35, a Tool Usage Chart. For more examples and explanations of tools, see "Tools for Teams"— a reference guide by the DOL Academy, May 1992.

Consensus decision-making

A group reaches consensus when all members agree upon a single alternative, and each group member can honestly say:

I believe that you understand my point of view and that I understand yours.

Whether or not I prefer this decision, I support it because:

◆ it was reached fairly and openly, and
◆ it is the best solution for us at this time.

This differs from "unanimous decision-making" in one important aspect. In consensus decision-making, members may consent to a decision without actually agreeing with it. Any person who disagrees, but consents to the decision, should be able to honestly say:

I understand the decision. I personally would not do that, but I feel that you understand my alternative. I have had the chance to sway you to my point of view, but have not been able to do so. The decision does not violate my principles. I am content to live with and support the group's decision.

Although reaching consensus can be hard work and time-consuming, it has the advantages of involving all members in the decision-making process and increasing their commitment to the outcome.

A useful test for consensus involves a "show of thumbs" by team members: thumb up for agreement, thumb down for disagreement, or thumb sideways for being able to live with and support the decision.

Silence in the form of failure to "show thumbs" must not be taken for consent. Only thumbs up or thumbs sideways, or verbal expressions of the same, reveal consent.

GROUP PROCESS

The concept of "group process" is best understood by contrasting it with the "content" of the group's work. Examples of content include the subject to be discussed, the task to be accomplished, the project to be undertaken, the decision to be made, etc.

GUIDLINES ON REACHING CONSENSUS

1. **Listen: pay attention to others.**

2. **Encourage participation.**

3. **Share information.**

4. **Don't agree too quickly.**

5. **Don't bargain or trade support.**

6. **Don't vote.**

7. **Treat differences as strengths.**

8. **Create a solution that can be supported.**

9. **Avoid arguing blindly for your own views.**

10. **Seek a win-win solution.**

1. Identify problems

7. Evaluate results

2. Select problem

PROBLEM
SOLVING
MODEL

6. Present/advocate
/implement
solution

3. Research the
problem

5. Choose the best
solution

4. Generate solutions
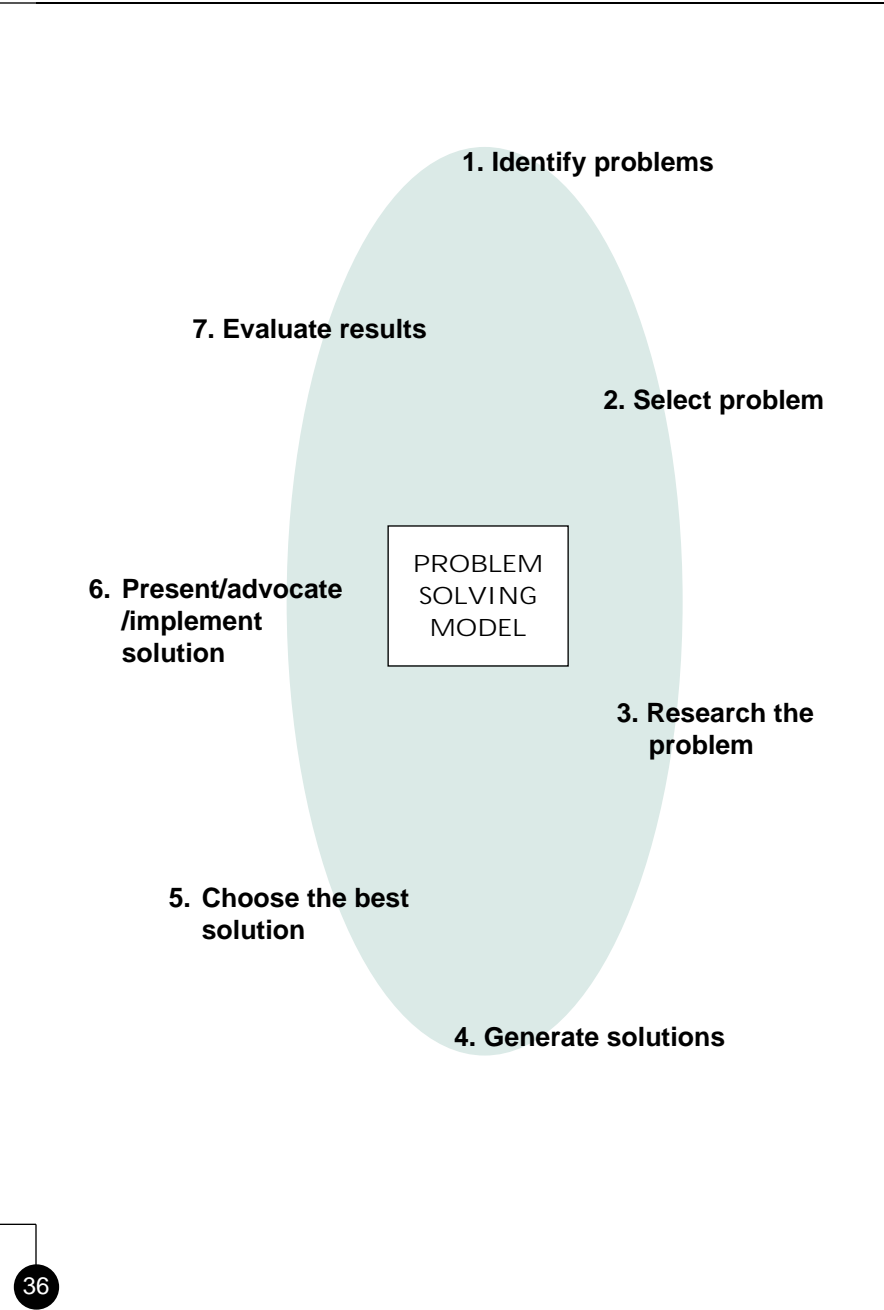
TOOL USAGE CHART

TOOL	PURPOSE	USE IN MODEL
Brainstorming	To generate ideas	Steps 1, 3, 4, 6, 7
Cause and effect (fishbone) diagram	To consider possible causes	Step 3
Check sheets	To show frequency of an event	Steps 1, 3, 7
Criterion - referenced decision making	To prioritize complex ideas or issues	Steps 2, 5
Flow charting	To analyze a process (to get picture of the situation or to pinpoint problems)	Steps 1 - 7
Force field analysis	To evaluate positive and negative forces	Steps 1, 5, 6
Multi-voting	To prioritize ideas	Steps 2, 5
Nominal group technique (NGT)	To prioritize ideas	Steps 2, 5
Operational definitions	To describe terms by measures used	Steps 1 - 7
Pareto charts	To determine and show the relative importance of something	Steps 1, 3, 7
Run charts	To picture the variation in a process and the sequence of the variation	Step 1, 3, 4
Sampling	To examine a part of a population while maintaining accuracy concerning entire population	Steps 3, 7
Statistical control chart	To display the variation in a process and the sequence of the variation AND degree variation is random or unique	Steps 1, 3

DECISION MAKING METHODS

METHOD OF DECISION MAKING	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Decision by authority without discussion Group leader makes decision	Useful for simple routine decisions. Should be used when there is very little time available to make the decision, when group members expect the leader to make the decision, and when group members lack the skills and information to make the decision any other way.	One person is not a good resource for every decision. Advantages of group interaction are lost: no commitment to implementing the decision is developed among other members; resentment and disagreement may result in sabotage and deterioration of group effectiveness. Resources of other members are not used.
Decision by expert The one who knows the most makes the decision	Useful when the expertise of one group member is so superior that it out weighs the need for group discussion. Should be used when only little support of group members is needed for implementation.	It is difficult for a group to determine the expert. No commitment by members to implement the decision. Advantages of group interaction are lost. Resentment and disagreement may result in sabotage and deterioration of group effectiveness. Resources of other group members are not used.
Decision by authority after discussion (consultation) Leader makes decision after listening to group	Uses the resources of group members for information. Some of the benefits of a group discussion are realized.	Creates an environment where group members compete for the attention of the leader. Members may feel inclined to say what the leader wants to hear. Does not foster group communication. Group decision, group conflict and controversy go unresolved.

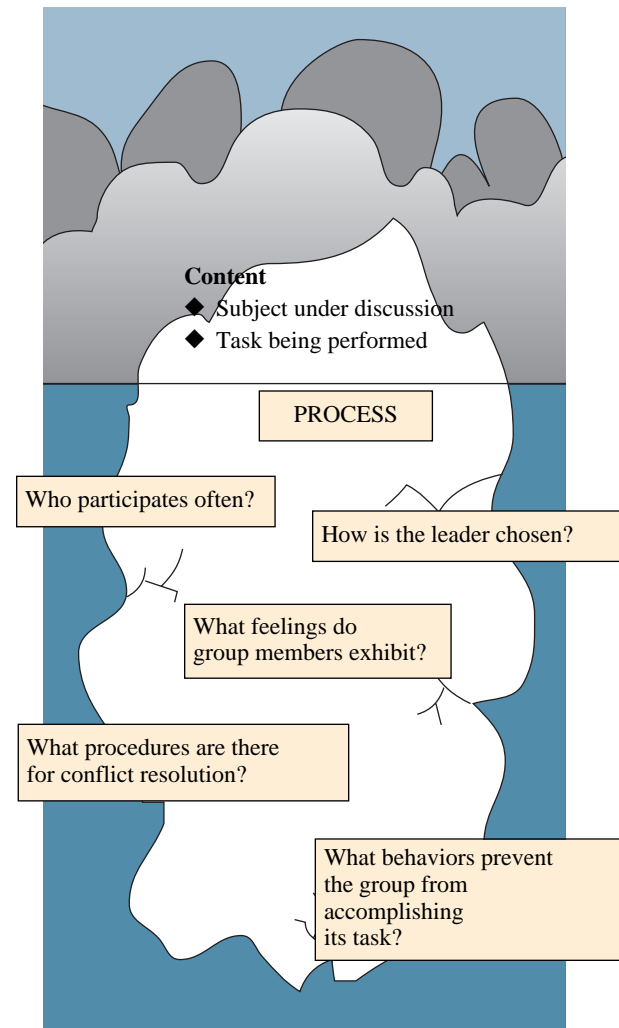| METHOD OF DECISION MAKING	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Decision by a majority At least 51% of the members must agree	Useful when insufficient time is available for a consensus decision to be made, or the decision is not important enough to use consensus. Works well if members commitment is not needed for implementation. Discontinues discussion of issues which are not critical for the group.	Separates team into winners and losers. Group members holding the minority viewpoint may withhold information at future meetings. Full commitment of group members is absent. Resources of the group are not fully utilized.
Decision by a consensus All members support the decision	Useful in making serious, important and complex decisions to which all members are committed. Produces an innovative, creative and high quality decision. Involves all members in the decision making process. Group resources are well utilized and decision making ability of the group is enhanced.	Not useful in an emergency. Takes a great deal of time. Skill-level of members must be high. Can sap energy of a group.
Unanimous decision	Everyone agrees on the course of action to follow. Acceptance is high. Easy to implement.	Almost impossible, given human nature.

Content is often graphically portrayed as the "tip of the iceberg." The invisible (and larger) part of the iceberg represents group process. Group process refers to the ways in which people relate to each other in order to make progress. Ways of relating are often referred to as "group dynamics" or "maintenance" issues. Such issues include, but are not limited to power (who leads?), participation (what are the patterns?), communication (is it open?), and conflict (how is it handled?).

Understanding and dealing with group process in teams is important because effective group process leads, progressively, to better relationships, better information sharing, better decision-making, and finally more rapid movement towards the team's content-related goal. Conversely, if group process is not attended to, then "hidden agendas," power struggles, continuing tension, unexpressed feelings and the like can sabotage progress. In such an atmosphere, participants are more likely to leave the team and/or withdraw their support for any decisions made.

Team Building Activities

There are various types of activities that contribute to a team's capacity to function harmoniously and effectively. Selection of an appropriate activity depends on an assessment, formal or informal, of the team's strengths and needs for improvement.

GROUP PROCESS
Content vs. Process

Content
◆ Subject under discussion
◆ Task being performed

PROCESS

Who participates often?

How is the leader chosen?

What feelings do group members exhibit?

What procedures are there for conflict resolution?

What behaviors prevent the group from accomplishing its task?

Team-building activities include the relatively simple:

◆ **icebreakers** designed to set a positive and upbeat tone and/or help participants get better acquainted at the beginning of its existence or the start of a particular session,

◆ **energizers** designed to provide mental stimulation and a fresh perspective, and can be used, for example, after a team finishes a major project or following a break in a particular session.

   Other types of activities encourage team members to take on more responsibility for "building the team"

◆ **learning opportunities** which involve a brief presentation by one or more team member(s) on recent training attended, books read, videos screened, etc. This could easily be incorporated into a regular team meeting;

◆ **expert presentations** which are customized learning opportunities arranged by and for team members dealing with either group maintenance or task issues, e.g., a workout model of organizational change, etc. These can usually be arranged on short notice, be scheduled at the team's convenience, and involve little or no cost; and even

◆ **celebrations** which foster fun, congratulate the team or individual team members for their successes, and create a festive atmosphere.

The most complex form of team-building activities are the formal training opportunities which abound in the ETA environment. Ideally, these involve full team participation because, in addition to skill development and practice, they contribute to a team's common language and conceptual base. This in turn enables a group to more easily achieve a common understanding of the issues it will face in its work and how to address them.

Improving interpersonal relationships, communications and information-sharing as a way of increasing the success of teams in ETA is a major focus of the "Skills for a High-Involvement Workforce" developed by Development Dimension International, Inc. Principles and guidelines for both practical and personal needs, and opportunities for becoming skilled in their application, are presented. For assistance in designing and conducting team building activities, contact the ETA Reinvention Office or the ETA Office of Human Resources.

Functional and Dysfunctional Behavior In Groups

Functional group behaviors keep the team working on the task or project at hand. They also help to maintain constructive working relationships among the team members, and allow diverse individuals to work effectively as a team.

Functional group behavior includes:

◆ **Initiating**—Proposing tasks or goals, defining a group problem, suggesting a procedure or idea for solving a problem.

◆ **Seeking information or opinions**—Requesting facts, asking for expressions of feelings or concerns, soliciting expressions of values, seeking suggestions and ideas.

◆ **Harmonizing**—Reconciling disagreements; reducing tension; getting people to explore differences, finding common ground.

◆ **Listening and encouraging**—Being responsive to others, indicating by verbal or non-verbal behavior interest in the views of others, supporting others' points.

◆ **Compromising**—Offering or accepting a compromise, admitting error, modifying position in the interest of group cohesion or growth.

◆ **Consensus-testing**—Asking to see if the group is nearing agreement on a decision, sending up "trial balloons", proposals, to see if a consensus is imminent.

From time to time, people behave in ways that do not help, and sometimes actually harm the team and the work it is trying to do.

Dysfunctional group behavior includes:

◆ **Being aggressive**—Asserting own interests, views, and rights above those of others; showing hostility toward the group or an individual within it; demeaning the contributions of others.

◆ **Blocking**—Interfering with the progress of the group by arguing points at length, rejecting ideas without consideration, refusing to work toward a consensus of the group.

◆ **Competing**—Polarizing discussions, creating win-lose alternatives, seeking to have one's point of view adopted by the group and have others' views rejected by the group.

◆ **Lobbying**—Introducing or arguing for ideas related to personal or parochial interests, biases, or feelings.

◆ **Horsing around**—Disrupting discussions or work sessions with clowning, joking, or other behaviors that interfere with the concentration of the group as distinct from appropriate and even helpful amounts of spirited good humor that can be very constructive.

◆ **Withdrawing**—Behaving in an indifferent or passive way about participation in the group or in discussion of issues raised by the group, entering into side discussions, resorting to excessive formality.

Strategies for Managing Conflict

Regardless of the source of the conflict, strategies can be employed by teams which will resolve conflicts constructively in almost all instances. They include:

◆ **Using ground rules**—Written, posted ground rules can help group members manage their own behavior. The first point of return when the team experiences difficulties, whether of an individual or group nature, is the ground rules. A team review of the ground rules may help provide a controlled yet supportive atmosphere when emotional behavior arises in the group. If a subject or group discussion or an assignment within the group is likely, by its subject matter, to prompt emotional reactions, it is useful to discuss that fact, and how to avoid emotional conflict before you get into it.

◆ **Acknowledging conflicts**—If differences of a cognitive nature arise within a discussion or while working on a task, recognize them openly at the time they occur.

◆ **Having individuals explain and listen to conflicting views**—When different points of view cannot be readily reconciled, it is helpful for (1) each proponent simply and objectively restate his or her point, while (2) others are asked to listen. Often a clear restatement will help the group see that the views are not mutually exclusive and can be accommodated into the group's discussion or decision.

◆ **Looking for common ground**—If differences are not resolved once restated, the individuals or the group then look for commonalities, opportunities for merging different ideas, or ideas for a compromise.

◆ **Identifying alternatives**—If differences cannot be merged or a compromise cannot be reached by the team members, try to come up with an alternative idea—one that all could agree on which is neither of the contested ideas.

◆ **Reviewing options**—If an alternative cannot be identified, then review the options available to the group. Should neither idea be pursued or considered? Should both? Any other alternatives?

◆ **Helping individuals resolve conflict**—If conflict between individuals is affecting the team's ability to do its work, a team member who is not directly involved in the conflict may try to help the people who are by confronting the people in conflict. The general approach to such a facilitated resolution is:

- Express concerns in terms of the group's need to do its work.
- Ask the individuals for ideas to resolve the problem.
- Offer alternatives that do not force a loss of face.

STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Several studies of group activities have confirmed there are certain predictable distinct stages of development in all groups.

While progression through the stages is chronological, groups develop at various paces and regress and progress among the various stages. Some groups never become fully mature and productive

STAGE 4 - PERFORMING

STAGE 3 - NORMING

STAGE 2 - STORMING

STAGE 1 - FORMING
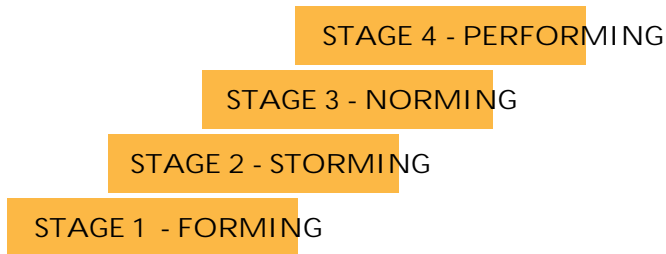
The benefits of understanding the existence of stages of development lies in the ability to anticipate what lies ahead while keeping "normal" problems of group formation in perspective. This knowledge, along with patience and effort, will maximize the chance that a group of individuals will gain insight into personal and interpersonal processes and accomplish a great deal of work as a cohesive team.

For more information on the evaluation process for Group Development, see Chapter 4.

STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

STAGE	SIGNS OF STAGE	HOW TO HELP GROUP
Initial "Forming"	Few members participate. Members seem unsure, want strong leaders. People seem polite. Members wonder if they can contribute.	Use familiar techniques to include everyone, lots of brainstorming. Emphasize team building. Discuss members feelings at conclusion of session.
Conflict "Storming"	Increased noise level. More side conversations. Leaders challenged. Leaders feel puzzled, ineffective. Conflict defined as "personality clashes".	Rely on flip chart to acknowledge differences. Ask group about the stage they are in. Coach leader to clarify and summarize frequently. Affirm value of differences.
Establishing patterns "Norming"	Frequent discussion of "the way we do things." Members feel comfortable with roles. Patterns are observable.	Acknowledge helpful norms. Encourage expansion of skills. Encourage group self assessment.
Interdependence and Action "Performing"	Task orientation does not preclude maintenance activities. More humor expressed. Roles less clearly associated with one member, more shared responsibility.	Take time to celebrate. Ask group about the stage and what contributes to success. Be aware of need for new members and relations with outsiders.

When we promise to hold ourselves account-able to our goals, we build commitment and trust. Trust is fundamental. It is the difference between traditional leadership and team leadership.

Teams need to know how they're doing. Are they meeting their goals? And what are their results? To measure success, they also need data: realistic, accurate data that shows the **results** of their actions.

In making decisions about what needs to be measured, the handy *Succeeding With Teams* recommends answering the following questions:

◆ What is our real objective?
◆ How can we track how well we are doing?
◆ How often should we measure?
◆ Who else should we involve in our measurement efforts?
◆ Does baseline data already exist? If not, where do we start?

A common mistake is over-measuring. Measurement should tell you how well you're doing your job but it should not become your job!

It is also important to measure how well the group is doing, i.e., meeting evaluation, effectiveness of group processes, as well as success in meeting team goals. In the following pages, there are tools that can be used for these measures.

MEASURING RESULTS

Use these questions to assess where you are in the process of meeting team goals.

Select the goals
◆ Has the team assessed the potential for progress?
◆ Is it an urgent problem?

Specify the minimum expectation of results
◆ Are the goals ambitious enough?
◆ Are the goals defined in a way that the team can see as exciting and achievable?

Communicate expectations early
◆ Are the performance requirements clear to the team?
◆ How well are you standing up to testing?

Monitor the project, delegate responsibility
◆ Has the team been provided with enough help?
◆ Is the team getting feedback on accomplishment and results for accountability and problem solving?

Expand and extend
◆ Is the team refining results and measures?
◆ Are they being rewarded and recognized for accomplishment of results?

MEETING EVALUATION

Effective meetings are an important tool for ensuring a team's success. It is valuable to review and evaluate each meeting before closing.

One evaluation process is a discussion around the following questions:

Effectiveness -
◆ Are we doing the right things? Asking the right questions? Tackling the right problems? Working on issues related to the project?

◆ How well did we stay focused? Did we look for problems within the system rather than blame individuals?
◆ How well did we discuss the information? How clearly? How well did we respond to each other's questions?

Efficiency -
◆ Are we doing things right? Are we taking unnecessary steps?
◆ How did this meeting go? How was the pace, flow, and tone of the meeting? Did we get stuck?
◆ What might we do differently? Do more of? Do less of? What should we continue? Not do at all?

The evaluation should include feedback to the facilitator and discussion leaders.

Another evaluation process is the use of a pre-printed rating scale (see pages 56-57). The ratings themselves are not as important as the discussion they provoke.

GROUP PROCESS ASSESSMENT

The questionnaire on pages 58-61 is designed to determine areas in which the group may be experiencing problems and highlight areas that need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of the group.

The questionnaire is most effective when being used by a group that has been together for a period of time. It is useful for a team to evaluate its process a minimum of once a year: more frequently for a newly formed team.

TEAM ACCOUNTABILITY

A great share of team success can be attributed to the accountability the team has to:

◆ its customer(s)
◆ its organization
◆ its own members

Critique/Feedback

A key element in groups progressing up the stages of development is feedback. Feedback is information we get about how we are doing.

It is very important for a group to know what is helpful and works well. Those things can continue or be done more often. It is equally, if not more important, to know what hurts or impedes. The group can choose to stop or change these things.

Feedback about HOW the group can work better together is gathered from the group with a technique called Group Critique. It is a critical element in a group's development (see page 58).

Each group member MUST be willing to say how they feel. This is an uncomfortable experience for most everyone. There are some basic guidelines for sharing.

◆ Use I statements.
◆ Be specific about what happened.
◆ Give both sides.
◆ Be straightforward.
◆ Don't criticize the person.
◆ Don't be vague or generalize.
◆ Don't avoid a subject.
◆ Concentrate on what's wrong, not who's wrong.

Accountability to Customers

Teams are in the best position to develop the factors and measures to be used in holding themselves accountable. In the case of the team's accountability to customers, the criteria for evaluating team effectiveness is best developed jointly by the team and its customers, the people who will use its work products or services. For example, suppose a team is established to develop recommendations for a planning process for FY97. The assignment may have come from any one of a number of sources: the Assistant Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Reinvention Team, or program managers. Members of the team should sit down with the commissioning individual or individuals — whoever is the "customer" for the recommendations — and work out clear expectations or standards, for the team's product. In addition to standards, the team and its customers may reach an agreement on a description of the final product; the timeframe in which it is to be developed; milestones for which progress will be reviewed; and feedback from the customer can all be established.

Accountability to the Organization

Suppose the team in this example is a standing work team, that is, a group whose members perform their regular jobs as a team. If that group were given the assignment to make recommendations for the goal setting process for FY97, the team may also want to establish performance expectations with the team leader or manager to whom it reports. The organization

in which the team resides is interested in the team meeting certain standards, for example, customer service or project management protocols. Depending on how self-managing the team is, organizational arrangements may vary. Team members may document their agreement with their team leader or manager in the form of a workplan which remains within the organization, or may, adopt one or more performance standards as part of their individual performance appraisal packages.

Accountability to the Team Itself

In the most mature self-managing work team, the primary focus of accountability is a more subtle one, namely accountability among the team's own members to each other. Team members' accountability to one another is credited by many team-centered organizations as the key to team productivity. If a team has developed to the level of full team accountability, it will hold itself accountable not only to customer service and organizational standards of performance, but also to its own standards as they have been articulated and agreed to by the team members. Team accountability involves both product and process accountability—that is, standards for its members work with customers and others when representing the team, and for behavior in the team's **internal** interactions.

At the end of this chapter you will find the following forms for your use:
• Stages of Group Development Critique
• Meeting Evaluation Form
• Group Process Assessment Questionnaire

STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT
Critique/Feedback

(To be completed by each member individually).

I feel our group is in stage _____
_____

What hurts or impedes our group? _____
_____
_____
_____

How we can stop or change it? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What is helpful and works well? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How can we continue or increase it? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Comments _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

MEETING EVALUATION FORM

YOUR VIEW	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1. I knew why we were having a meeting before I came to the meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I knew what the desired outcomes were for the meeting before I arrived.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Everyone who should have been at the meeting had been told it was being held.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The physical arrangements for the meeting were handled well.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I received an agenda before I came to the meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Before I came to the meeting, I knew what processes would be used to address agenda items (e.g., brainstorming, diagnosing a problem, developing solutions, selecting a solution, consensus).	1	2	3	4	5
7. Enough time was allotted to address agenda items.	1	2	3	4	5
8. At the beginning of the meeting, the purpose of the meeting was stated clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
9. At the beginning of the meeting, everyone agreed on what he or she would like to see come out of the meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Everyone had a chance to modify the agenda and agree on priorities and time allocations.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Everyone agreed to the processes to be employed in addressing the agenda items.	1	2	3	4	5

GROUP PROCESS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

YOUR OPINION

Instructions: Please give your honest opinion of how your team/ group/committee is currently operating by rating its charac- teristics on the 5-point scale below. Circle the appro- priate number after each statement to represent your perception.
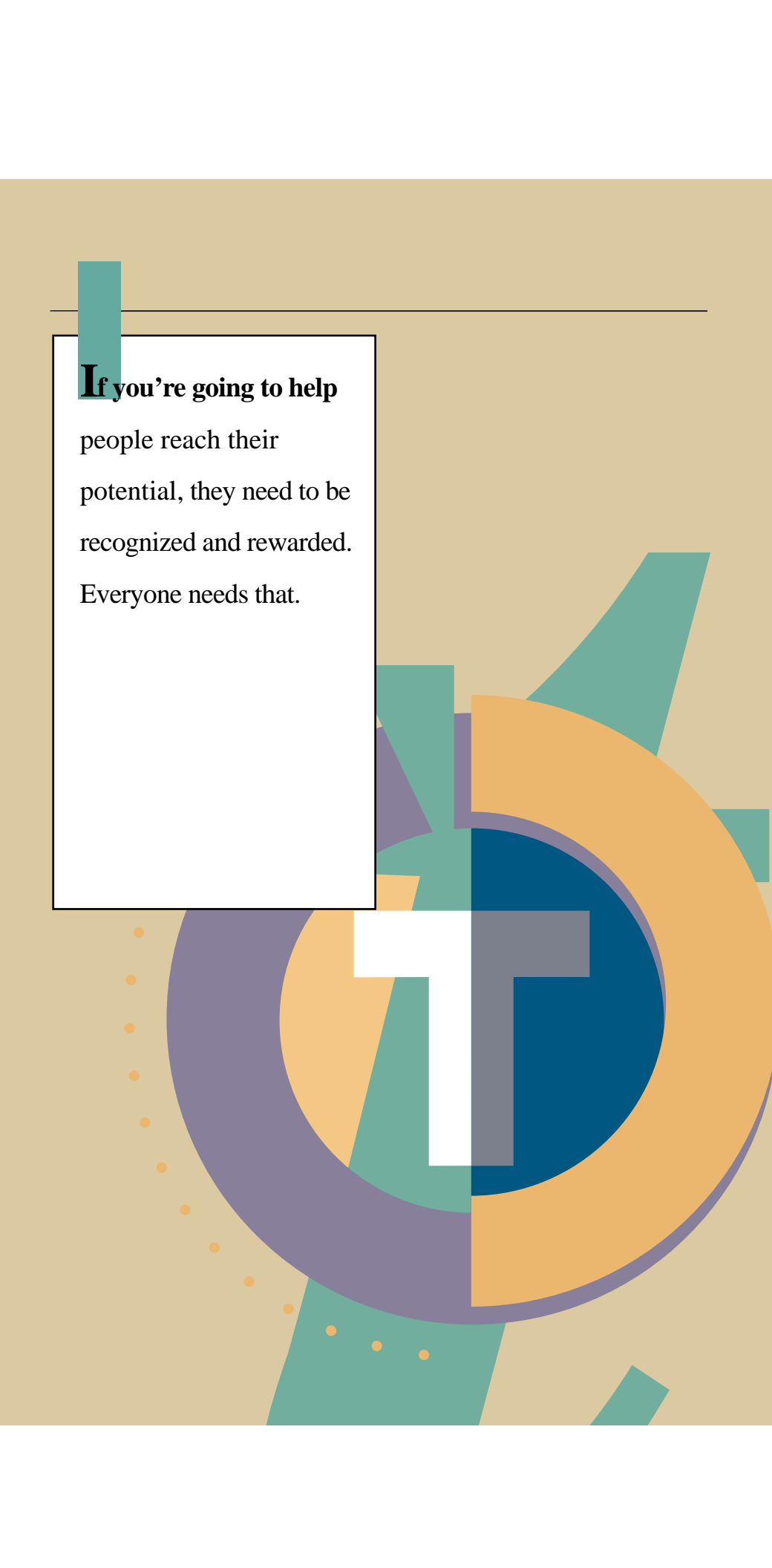
The group's summary response will help

determine problem areas that the team/ group/committee needs to work on.

Statement	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1. The goals of our team are clear.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The team has a well-established approach to solving problems.	1	2	3	4	5
3. When there is a difference of opinion among members, we seek a solution that is acceptable to everyone and do **not** vote.	1	2	3	4	5
4. We regularly report our team progress to all interested parties.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I understand the personal values and goals of most of the members.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am comfortable sharing information about myself with other team members.	1	2	3	4	5
7. We usually work together as a team.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I understand what is expected of me as a member of this team.	1	2	3	4	5
9. We carefully identify and define a problem before seeking solutions.	1	2	3	4	5
10. When I disagree with proposed course of action, I do **not** feel pressured to accept the majority viewpoint.	1	2	3	4	5
11. We regularly seek information from those who will be affected by our decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Each of us are aware of particular strengths and potential contribution of each member.	1	2	3	4	5

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	UNDECIDED	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
13. Our team members give each other constructive feedback on how their behavior is affecting others.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Our team members are concerned not only about getting to task done, but also about getting each other involved and motivated.	1	2	3	4	5
15. We treat differences of opinion as a strength, knowing that better decisions will result from sharing different viewpoints.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Our group conducts interviews with those it represents to identify, diagnose, and solve organizational problems.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The members understand personality differences and know how to make the best use of each other's talents.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Our members listen to one another, often restating another member's point of view to be sure it has been understood.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I feel that I have a considerable amount of influence on what takes place at a team meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Our team develops implementation plans and determines appropriate criteria for evaluating the success of the plans.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Our members are competent to prepare and deliver whatever presentations the team is called upon to make.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I feel that I know most of the other members as persons.	1	2	3	4	5
23. We deal with conflict openly and honestly in an effort to resolve it.	1	2	3	4	5

If you're going to help people reach their potential, they need to be recognized and rewarded. Everyone needs that.

One of our most important reinvention objectives is to recognize associates and teams for their contributions to better serve their internal and external customers. EVERYONE wants to be recognized and appreciated. In today's climate, rewards and recognition for ETA associates have become more important than ever for several reasons:

◆ Associates are increasingly being asked to do more and to do it more in teams, with less direct supervision. We need to create work environments that reinforce positive behaviors.

◆ Rewards and recognition provide an effective, LOW-COST way of encouraging higher levels of performance and increasing job satisfaction of associates.

As discussed by Bob Nelson in his book, *1001 Ways to Reward Employees*, there are several guiding principles that one should keep in mind when setting up both formal and informal awards programs or events:

◆ **Match the reward to the team.** Teams need to be rewarded in ways that they value. Within the general parameters of the ETA Awards and Recognition programs there is

flexibility in types of rewards that can be given to team. This is especially true of non-monetary awards. Asking teams what sort of recognition they would prefer is a sure way of taking care of personal preferences. For example, some teams would value a time off award while others would prefer a picnic or a personal thank you from the secretary.

◆ **Match the reward to the achievement.** Effective reinforcement should be customized to take into account the significance of the achievement. The reward should be a function of the amount of involvement, effort, and particularly the RESULTS accomplished.

◆ **Be timely and specific.** To be effective, rewards need to be given as soon as possible after the desired behavior or achievement. Rewards that come weeks or months later do little to motivate associates. It should always be clear why the reward is being given — provide a context for the achievement.

Catherine Meek, president of Meek and Associates, compensation consultants, suggests the following guidelines for effective reward and recognition (R & R) programs.

◆ R & R programs should reflect the company's (agency's) values and business strategy (mission and vision).
◆ Employees should participate in the development and execution of the R & R programs.
◆ R & R Programs can involve cash, non-cash or both.

◆ Since what is meaningful for one person may not be meaningful to someone else, the programs should encompass variety.
◆ Programs should be highly public.
◆ Programs have a short life span and should be changed frequently.

CURRENT ETA AWARD AND RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

There are two distinct types of awards systems within ETA. One is the award "pay out" associated with the performance appraisal process. The other is the ETA Employee Recognition Program which is designed to reward and recognize associates and teams for specific accomplishments.

The ETA Employee Recognition Program
This is the new awards program that is designed to support ETA's mission, values and goals and to encourage associates to participate in activities and decisions affecting their work lives.

The program encompasses recognition of associates within ETA through the monetary and non-monetary incentive awards and under the Secretary's Annual Honor Awards Program. In addition, the program includes external awards sponsored by public and private sector organizations who solicit nominations from various sources, usually to recognize outstanding contributions in a particular field, such as information management or executive excellence.

The structure of the program is built on the principles of partnership and all associate

participation and involvement. The key elements of the program are as follows:

◆ **Decentralization to the organizational level** of the awards nomination review, selection and presentation process through Awards Recognition committees at both the office and agency-wide level. The ETA Agency-wide Awards committee has developed a monetary team award for cross-program and multi-locational teams. For natural work teams or intact office teams, the office awards committees will be responsible for developing appropriate recognition vehicles for their teams.

◆ **Flexibility to develop or tailor non-monetary awards** that recognize and reward specific types of accomplishments and contributions most valuable to the office and to ETA.

◆ **All associate nomination process** which allows for participation of all associates through self-nominations and peer nominations.
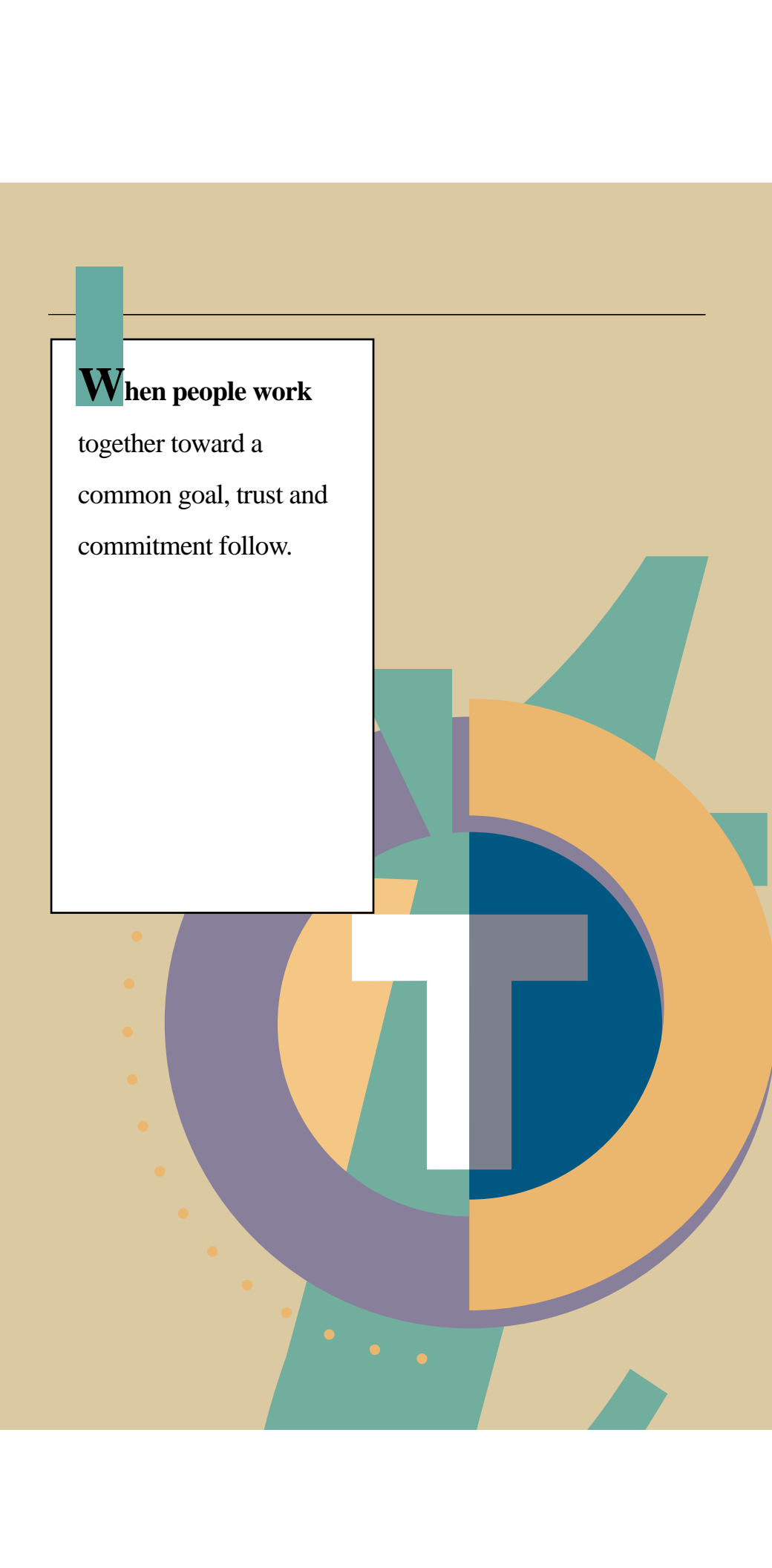
While we have the formal awards/recognition programs discussed above, teams themselves can and should make special efforts to reward and recognize the accomplishments of the team and their team members. This sort of recognition can come in many forms with little or no costs involved. Team lunches or brunches, Team Member of the Month, or free coffee for a week are just a few examples. For outside recognition, be aware of opportunities to showcase the accomplishments of the team. If possible it is important to recognize all team members.

A sincere word of thanks from the right person can mean more to people than formal awards, plaques, or certificates, as demonstrated by the following example cited by Bob Nelson:

Peggy Noonan, former President Reagan's speech writer, in her book <u>What I Saw at the Revolution</u> tells about a personal note she received from the President. She had been writing for him for four months and had not yet met him. One day the President wrote "Very Good" on one of her speech drafts. First, she stared at it. She then took a pair of scissors and cut it off and taped it to her blouse, like a second grader with a star. All day, people noticed it and looked at her and she beamed back at them.

For information about rewards and recognition, contact either the ETA Agency-Wide Awards Committee or the local office committees. They can give you information about the types of awards available, resources, and upcoming recognition events. The Office of Human Resources is also a good source of information in this area.

In summary, everyone likes to be recognized. It motivates, energizes, and just makes people feel good to know that they are appreciated. This is particularly important in a changing environment where there is some uncertainty and anxiety.

When people work together toward a common goal, trust and commitment follow.

No team exists without problems. But some teams—particularly those who have learned to counter the negative team dynamics—seem to be especially good at preventing many typical group problems. How close a team comes to this ideal depends on the following essential ingredients:

1. **Clarity in Team Goals**
   Ideally, the team. . .
   - ◆ agrees on its mission
   - ◆ sees the mission as workable
   - ◆ has a clear vision and can progress steadily towards its goals
   - ◆ is clear about the larger project goals and the purpose of individual steps, meetings, discussion, and decisions

2. **An Improvement Plan**
   Ideally the team. . .
   - ◆ has created a work plan
   - ◆ has a flow chart or similar document describing the steps they will take
   - ◆ refers to these documents when discussing what directions to take next
   - ◆ knows what resources and training are needed throughout their work

3. **Clearly Defined Roles**
   Ideally the team. . .
   - ◆ has formally designated roles and all

members know what is expected of everyone
- ◆ understands which roles belong to one person and which are shared, and how the shared roles are assigned
- ◆ uses each member's talent, and involves everyone in team activities so no one feels under-utilized, left out or taken advantage of

4. Clear Communications
Ideally team members should. . .
- ◆ speak with clarity and directness
- ◆ be succinct, avoiding long anecdotes and examples
- ◆ listen actively, explore rather than debate each speaker's ideas
- ◆ avoid interrupting and talking when others are speaking
- ◆ share information on many levels

5. Beneficial Team Behaviors
Ideally, team members should. . .
- ◆ initiate discussions
- ◆ seek information and opinions
- ◆ suggest procedures for reaching a goal
- ◆ clarify or elaborate on ideas
- ◆ summarize
- ◆ test for consensus
- ◆ act as gatekeeper (direct conversational traffic), avoid simultaneous conversation, throttle dominant talkers, make room for reserved talkers
- ◆ keep the discussion from digressing
- ◆ compromise and be creative in resolving differences
- ◆ try to ease tension in the group and work through difficult matters

- ◆ get the group to agree on standards
- ◆ refer to documentation and data
- ◆ praise and correct others with equal fairness—accept both praise and complaints

6. Well-defined Decision Procedures
Ideally, the team should. . .
- ◆ discuss how decisions will be made, such as when to take a poll, when to decide by consensus
- ◆ explore important issues by polling (state an opinion verbally)
- ◆ decide important issues by consensus
- ◆ test for consensus
- ◆ use data as the basis of decisions

7. Balanced Participation
Ideally, the team should. . .
- ◆ have reasonable balanced participation, with all members' contributing to most discussions
- ◆ build on members natural styles of participation

8. Established Ground Rules
Ideally, the team should. . .
- ◆ have open discussion regarding ground rules, where the group discusses what behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable
- ◆ openly state or acknowledge norms

9. Awareness of Group Process
Ideally, team members should. . .
- ◆ be sensitive to nonverbal communication, for example, be aware that silence may indicate disagreements, or physical signs

of agitation might indicate someone is
uncomfortable with a discussion
◆ see, hear, and feel the group dynamics
◆ process problems
◆ contribute equally to group process and
meeting content
◆ choose to work on group process issues
and occasionally designate a team mem-
ber or outsider to officially observe and
report on group interactions at a meeting.

The most important ingredients in this
"recipe," of course, are the team members them-
selves. Success in any team environment
demands the skills, energies, ideas, creativity,
and participation of everyone involved.
Building the commitment of a team to its
own success means not overlooking those things
that help hold it together, such as trust, respect,
communication, accountability and a shared
sense of purpose. The business of teams
involves the work of the organization, although
it doesn't end there. It is also a business about
people and relationships which will ultimately
impact both the work and the organization.
The Team Kit was designed to offer tips,
tools and best practices associated with shifting
to the team environment. We hope the Kit
proves itself a valuable resource guide for you
as you begin—and in some cases, continue—the
process of long-term organizational success in
forming productive, effective teams to better
serve our customers.

NOTES